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843 782 presentation of a piece of a broken cocoanut. Occasionally, particularly when the woman is in severe pain before the time her birth-pangs are expected and normal, there may be a special sacrifice of one of the animals noted above. Hindus also observe similar ceremonies.

843 789 There are certain charms which are believed to be useful to the expectant mother to ward off evil. A small metal box for the protecting *devi* is worn on a cotton thread round the neck, while a copper necklace is regarded as an especially effective protection. Sometimes the leaves [824] of the *tulasi* plant (*Ocymum sanctum*) are useful. Such leaves may be laid on the mother's abdomen with a prayer that she may be safeguarded through this dangerous period. These various means help in the prevention of miscarriage which, if it does occur, is believed to be due to the influence of some evil force. But even should a demon trip the woman up and cause her to fall heavily to the ground, no harm will result if these precautions have been attended to. When there is a case of miscarriage the foetus is taken away to the burial ground and put into a hole without any ceremony.

845 789 *Labour.* Among the more primitive Kols difficult labour is ascribed to evil spirits; the more advanced ones speak of it as a punishment due from Bhagawan for some bad *karma*. In case the delivery proves difficult there are certain things that should be done. Some Kols definitely averred that nothing can alter the difficulties of labour, but questions have been answered in such a way by others that it appears to be established that there are magical practices in this connection. If things are not going well the first thing to be done is to make a suitable offering to a *devi* or *deva*, or both. Then one should go carefully about the house and open the mouth of each covered earthen pot; the knots on every bundle should be carefully untied and strings or pieces of ropes untwisted. As far as possible every closed thing in the house should be opened up. This, it is believed, will make the delivery easier. Often five handfuls of rice are taken out of the opened rice jar and Bhagawan is challenged to divide the grains into two equal parts without making an error. They imply that if he can do such a thing and do it right he will surely be able to see the child safely through delivery.

844 787 Another magical use of grain is also made at this critical hour. Prayers are first offered for a safe delivery, then a handful of grain is taken out of the pot by a male member of the family. This is carefully counted. If it happens that the number of grains is even, then all will be well, for it is a good omen, and the delivery will be easy. If the number is an odd one, it is a warning of the likelihood of pain and danger.

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part of one, and if another person should get it he would have power over the child. Its burial is also, strangely, a proof of birth. If a Kol is asked where he was born he replies: "My *nara* is buried in...." and names the village. In a real sense a part of him is buried there and he is a part of that village. The spot is plastered over with a mixture of cow dung, earth and water, and the fire lit over it. The *hom* sacrifice may also be offered.

Any extraordinary happening at birth or anything unusual is generally considered a bad sign. For example, a child born with teeth already in its mouth is much feared, for it signifies bad luck and a member of the family, probably one of the parents, will be sure to die within a short time. They say the child has come to destroy a member of the family. An extra finger, though, is considered as a good omen. Twins seem to have no special significance attached to them and their occurrence appears to be infrequent among the Kols.

The Sixth Day Ceremony: *Chhatthi*. After six days it is believed that the greatest period of danger is over and the woman can begin to make preparations to take up her normal life. This period corresponds with the time of greatest physical danger, for by the sixth day after birth, the dreaded septicaemia, if it is to come, will make its appearance. When day has come and all is well the *dhobi* and the *nai* are usually sent for. The former takes all the soiled clothes. The wife, after a preliminary bath and anointing by the *dai*, puts on fresh clothes. The barber trims the nails of her hands and feet and puts vermilion on both her feet and the feet of her child so that no evil spirit may harm them as they make their way to the place of the ceremonial bath. Her head has been oiled with *til* oil and occasionally the child has been pricked on the stomach with a hot iron, so that "the waters may be digested". All the earthen vessels in the house should be thrown out and new ones purchased from the Kumhar, and the house should be cleaned and plastered. The *nai* also gives the male members of the family a good shave, both of the face and the head.

The mother is now ready for the ceremonial bath at the village bathing place. The women of the household go there in a group accompanied by a Basor beating a drum. This is done just at sundown. The mother carries a brass vessel (*lota*) on the top of which burns an earthenware lamp (*diya*). At the place of bathing offerings are made: cocoanut, *haldi*, *supari*. Incense may be sprinkled in the fire in the lamp. Mustard seed (*rai*) is often scattered about in order to frighten off any evil spirits which may be at the place ready to injure the mother and the child. There is then a formal sort of bath, the water being

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and fearful for at least twelve years. Usually such spirits are not dangerous, and some have said that after twelve years they go to Bhagwan or may be born into the world again. 762 775

Sometimes the woman may die in childbirth and the child be born alive. If so, it is thought very likely that the child owes its life to an evil spirit, who desires it for some evil purpose, and hence the child may really be a *bhut*. It is very difficult to get a wet nurse for such children and they usually do not survive very long. 845 776 775

We happened to be in a Kol village a few hours after an earthquake and we asked a group what caused the movement of the earth. Nearly all at once agreed that the earth shook because of *pap*, or sin. One or two though, began to think and said that the real reason was that the earth rested upon the heads of *Nag*—a many-headed serpent, and that once in twelve years he had to shift the earth from one head to another and that produced an earthquake. But when confronted with the obvious fact that an earthquake came oftener than once in twelve years they were puzzled and could not account for it. The latter explanation is the one frequently advanced among Hindus, but Kols were not very familiar with it. 823 [773] 177]

Rain, so intimately connected with the welfare of forest people, may often be brought to pass by magical processes, and there are frequent instances of this among the tribes and castes of Central Provinces. In many of these rites nudity is an essential part, for moved by pity at their representation of poverty, Indra or some rain *devta* will grant refreshing showers. No trace of nudity practices was found among the Kols. The more sophisticated Kol believes that rain is sent only by Indra, the Vedic god of rain, and that it is only through a Brahmin that the gift of rain may be secured. 821 [291] [177]

Some Kols use frogs in an attempt to bring the rains. Frogs and rains are intimately associated in their minds, for in the weeks that precede the coming of the monsoon, the frogs croak long and loudly, and it is thought that their calls bring the showers. So if the monsoon is delayed and there is a drouth, Kol boys will round up all the frogs they can. The larger they are the better for this purpose. A thread is tied round the leg of each frog and they are then dragged about the village. As they pass by houses the people living there come out and sprinkle a bit of water over them. The boys and their frogs finally end up at the village shrine and the latter are tied before the *devi*. It is said that the croaking of the frogs at the shrine will affect the *devi* resident there and she too will long for cooling showers, so she gets to work and uses her influence and power to help bring the rain to pass. 821 825 789